DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 635 CS 207 910

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TITLE Comprehension Test of Oral Contrastive Stress.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 21p.; From author's Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University. For related documents, see CS 207 904-945.
PUB TYPE Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; Intonation; Language Usage; Measures (Individuals); *Oral Language; *Reading Comprehension; *Sentences; *Stress (Phonology)
IDENTIFIERS *The Research Instruments Project

ABSTRACT

Designed to assess a reader's comprehension of items differing in contrastive vocal stress, this test consists of 64 items divided evenly between eight sentence types: declarative active, declarative passive, interrogative, and imperative, with each in a positive and negative form. The element of contrastive stress is placed on nouns functioning as subject; verbs as main predicate; nouns as objects of prepositions; nouns as direct objects; adjectives; and adverbs of time, place, and manner. Subjects listen to a question followed by a sentence repeated three times with the element of contrastive vocal stress being placed on a different word in each sentence to produce alternative meanings. Subjects then select the best rendition of the sentence to answer the initial question. Validity, reliability, and normative data are included. (This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts, Volume 2," published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. The TRIP review, included here as an introduction to the instrument, describes the instrument's category (reading), title, author, date, age range (upper elementary), purpose, and physical characteristics.) (HTH)

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Comprehension Test of Oral Contrastive Stress.

The measurement instruments contained in this document have been reviewed in a monograph (cited below) edited by William T. Fagan, Charles Cooper, and Julie Jensen, for The Research Instruments Project (TRIP), and funded by a grant from the Trustees of the NCTE Research Foundation:

Measures for Research and Evaluation
in the
English Language Arts
Volume II

The purpose of the editors has been to select and review measurement instruments pertaining to all aspects of research and evaluation in the English language arts, e.g. language and language development, literacy, literature, reading (including comprehension, teacher-pupil interaction, etc.), writing, and teacher knowledge and attitudes. In order to make some of the actual instruments reviewed more readily available, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) has cooperated with the editors by processing selected instruments into the ERIC system (see the 42 documents assigned Clearinghouse accession numbers CS 207 904-945).

CS 207910

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Category: Reading

Title: Comprehension Test of Oral Contrastive Stress

Author: Carole Kirchner Stice.

Age Range: Upper Elementary

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To assess a reader's comprehension of items differing in contrastive stress.

Date of Construction: 1978.

Physical Description: This test was devised as part of a research study to determine if a relationship existed between a reader's comprehension of contrastive stress and performance on a silent reading comprehension test. The test consisted of 64 items which were divided evenly between eight sentence types: declarative active, declarative passive, interrogative, and imperative, with each in a positive and negative form. The element of contrastive stress was placed on nouns functioning as subject, verbs as main predicate, nouns as objects of prepositions, nouns as direct objects, adjectives, and adverbs of time, place, and manner.

In order to reduce the problem of short term memory, each subject was given a copy of the responses without the marked stress. The test required the subject to listen to a question followed by a sentence repeated three times with the element of contrastive stress being placed on a different word in each sentence to produce alternative meanings among the three sentences. The subjects were required to listen, read along on their copy and select on their answer sheet, the best rendition of the sentence to answer the question. The administration required approximately 45 minutes. An example is given below:

If Arnold ate the cake rather than the pie, which way would you say this sentence?

a. Arnold did not éat the pie.

b. Árnold did not eat the pie.

c. Arnold did not eat the pie.

Validity, Reliability, and Normative Data:

The test was submitted for construct and content validation to a panel of experts consisting of two university professors of Language Arts, one professor of Foreign Language Education, one professor of Reading, and one professor of Linguistics at Florida State University. The readability of each set of sentences (by type) was kept to approximately fourth grade or below. However, the results of a pilot study conducted on fourth, fifth, and sixth graders indicated that even though the vocabulary

length, and complexity of the test sentences was at fourth grade level, the task required by the questions apparently required higher levels of cognition.

Reliability was assessed by the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, and on the scores of 304 sixth graders, yielded a coefficient of .92.

Correlations between scores on the Test of Oral Contrastive stress and The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, Level 2, Form Q, 1972 edition were all significant at the .01 level.

Related Documents:

Stice, Carole Kirchner. The relationship between comprehension of oral contrastive stress and silent reading comprehension. Research in the Teaching of English. Vol. 12, No. 2, 137-142. May, 1978. (EJ 186 574)

APPENDIX I

COMPREHENSION TEST OF ORAL CONTRASTIVE STRESS

Introduction

Today you are going to take a listening test. The purpose of this test is to find out how well sixth grade boys and girls understand these kinds of questions. It will not affect your classroom grade and your teachers will not know your individual scores. Your teachers will be told how well you do as a group. Your teachers will also be told how well the boys compare with the girls, so do the best you can.

Please print only your first and last name on your answer sheet. Do not mark on the test booklet. Do not mark anything on your answer sheets until you are told to do so. Read these directions silently while you listen to them.

Directions:

This is a special kind of listening test. You will be asked a question about the meaning of each of the sentences in your test booklet. You will also hear each sentence spoken three different ways. Each way of saying the sentence will change its most important sounding part. As the most important part of each sentence is changed the meaning will change a little also. Your job is to listen to the question and you are to decide which one of the three ways to say each sentence best answers the question. You should read the question and read each sentence silently as you listen to them. This will help you choose the best answer. When you have made your decision you are to mark on your answer sheet, according to the letter of your choice.

For example: If someone said to you "John ate the fish on Friday." The most important sounding part of that sentence was on the word Friday. Friday tells when John ate the fish.

If someone said to you: John ate the fist on Friday, the most important part would tell:

A. a. who ate the fish?
b. which fish he ate?
c. what he ate?

A. A B C D E

The most important sounding word in that sentence was fish and it told what he ate. You would have marked the space for letter C on your answer sheet.

Let's try another example: If I ask you what Hank Aaron is good at, the best way to answer my question would be:

B. a. He is good at baseball. B. A B C D E
b. He is good at baseball.
c. He is good at baseball.

The best way to answer the question, "What is Hank Aaron good at," would be B because that makes baseball sound the most important part of the sentence and basball answers what Hank Aaron is good at. Therefore, you would have marked the space for the letter B on your answer sheet.

Now turn in your test booklet to page 1--question 1 and locate the spaces for question one on your answer sheet. As soon as everyone is ready, we will begin. Remember, it will help to read each question silently while you listen to it. Be sure to hear all three choices before you mark your answer.

PART I

1. If you wanted to find out about what Marvin ate, which would be the best way to ask this question?

   a. How many pieces of cake did Marvin eat?
   b. How many pieces of cake did Marvin eat?
   c. How many pieces of cake did Marvin eat?

2. If you wanted to tell someone who was coming, which would be the best way to say it?

   a. My Aunt Fanny is coming to school today.
   b. My Aunt Fanny is coming to school today.
   c. My Aunt Fanny is coming to school today.

3. If you wanted someone to know when you did a certain thing, which would be the best way to tell them?

   a. I belted Mortimer in the nose yesterday.
   b. I belted Mortimer in the nose yesterday.
   c. I belted Mortimer in the nose yesterday.

4. If you asked where you went this morning, which would be the best way to answer?

   a. We went to the circus this morning.
   b. We went to the circus this morning.
   c. We went to the circus this morning.

5. If you wanted to tell a friend what to do to the bag, which would be the best what to say it?

   a. Hit the punching bag as hard as you can.
   b. Hit the punching bag as hard as you can.
   c. Hit the punching bag as hard as you can.

6. If you wanted to tell someone where not to put something, which would be the best way to say it?

   a. Don't leave all that money here.
   b. Don't leave all that money here.
   c. Don't leave all that money here.

7. If you wanted to assure a friend that she didn't need to help to look for her lost parakeet, which would be the best way to tell her?

   a. Herman will find it for you.

b. Herman will find it for you.
c. Herman will find it for you.

8. If you wanted to explain what the police did to the concert, which would be the best way to say it?

a. The rock concert was stopped by the police.
b. The rock concert was stopped by the police.
c. The rock concert was stopped by the police.

9. If you wanted to know when you could do something, which would be the best way to ask the question?

a. What are we going to do now?
b. What are we going to do now?
c. What are we going to do now?

10. If you wanted to know how your friend was going to get to the game, which would be the best way to ask him?

a. Aren't you riding the bus to the game?
b. Aren't you riding the bus to the game?
c. Aren't you riding the bus to the game?

11. If you were asked where your pet raccoon should go, which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. Please let my pet raccoon come in.
b. Please let my pet raccoon come in.
c. Please let my pet raccoon come in.

12. If you were telling your parents which of the explosions was heard by the class, the best way to say it would be:

a. The loudest explosion was heard by the class.
b. The loudest explosion was heard by the class.
c. The loudest explosion was heard by the class.

13. If you had to tell the principal what Buster broke, which would be the best way to say it?

a. The window was broken by Buster.
b. The window was broken by Buster.
c. The window was broken by Buster.

14. If you wanted to let someone know that you had more than one friend, which would be the best way to tell them?

a. Shirley is not my only friend.
b. Shirley is not my only friend.
c. Shirley is not my only friend.

15. If you wanted to tell your sister where not to look for your baby brother, which would be the best way to say it?

a. Dón't look on the porch for Bobo.
b. Don't look on the porch for Bóbo.
c. Don't look on the porch for Bobo.

16. If you wanted to find out how Darrell got his new baseball, which would be the best way to ask the question?

a. Didn't Darrell steal that baseball?
b. Didn't Darrell steal that baseball?
c. Didn't Darrell steal that baseball?

17. If you wanted to tell your sick friend how to get to the hospital, which would be the best way to say it?

a. Go to the hospital as quickly as possible.
b. Go to the hospital as quickly as possible.
c. Go to the hospital as quickly as possible.

18. If you wanted people to know what Arnold did not do with the food, which would be the best way to tell them?

a. Arnold didn't eat that.
b. Arnold didn't eat that.
c. Arnold didn't eat that.

19. If you wanted to find out what Wilbur does with his time, which would be the best way for you to ask the question?

a. What does Wilbur do in the afternoon?
b. What does Wilbur do in the afternoon?
c. What does Wilbur do in the afternoon?

20. If you wanted to find out what the lizard had bitten, which would be the best way for you to ask the question?

a. Didn't the lizard bite your toe?
b. Didn't the lizard bite your toe?
c. Didn't the lizard bite your toe?

21. If someone asked you whether the brownies were for Alice or Whether she brought the brownies, which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. The brownies were not made by Alice.
b. The brownies were not made by Alice.
c. The brownies were not made by Alice.

22. If you wanted to know which flowers Charlie was going to pick, how would you best ask the question?

a. Isn't Charlie going to pick the purple flowers?

b. Isn't Charlie going to pick the purple flowers?
c. Isn't Charlie going to pick the purple flowers?

23. If you were asked what damage the dog had done, which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. The wreck was caused by the St. Bernard.
b. The wreck was caused by the St. Bernard.
c. The wreck was caused by the St. Bernard.

24. If someone asked you what you wanted to look at, which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. Let me see the picture.
b. Let me see the picture.
c. Let me see the picture.

25. If you wanted to tell a friend who he should not have lunch with, which would be the best way to say it?

a. Don't have lunch with Delbert.
b. Don't have lunch with Delbert.
c. Don't have lunch with Delbert.

26. If your mother asked you where you keep your pet frogs, which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. I won't tell you where they are.
b. I won't tell you where they are.
c. I won't tell you where they are.

27. If you wanted to tell someone which duck not to get wet, what would be the best way to say it?

a. Please don't wet the little duck.
b. Please don't wet the little duck.
c. Please don't wet the little duck.

28. If you were asked what animal the class does not like, which would be the best answer to the question?

a. Baby skunks aren't liked very well by the class.
b. Baby skunks aren't liked very well by the class.
c. Baby skunks aren't liked very well by the class.

29. If you wanted to tell someone which fruit doesn't taste good, how would you best say it?

a. These crabapples don't taste very good.
b. These crabapples don't taste very good.
c. These crabapples don't taste very good.

30. If you wanted to tell someone who does not feed the snakes,

which would be the best way to answer the question?

a. The snakes are not fed by Patty.
b. The snakes are not fed by Patty.
c. The snakes are not fed by Patty.

31. If you wanted to know who had his picture taken with a moose, which would be the best way to ask the question?

a. Did Calvin have his picture taken with a moose?
b. Did Calvin have his picture taken with a moose?
c. Did Calvin have his picture taken with a moose?

32. If you wanted to tell your teacher who did not tie the ribbons, which would be he best way to say it?

a. These ribbons were not tied by Ralph.
b. These ribbons were not tied by Ralph.
c. These ribbons were not tied by Ralph.

Directions: In Part II you are asked to listen for the most important part of each sentence. Then you are to decide what the most important sounding part of each sentence tells about. Mark your answers as you did for Part I.

33. If you heard someone ask, "Why won't Wolfgang fix his bicycle?" the most important part would tell:

    a. who won't fix his bicycle?
    b. what he won't fix?
    c. how he won't fix it?

34. If you heard someone say "The wagon was pulled by an ostrich," the most important part would tell:

    a. how the wagon was moved?
    b. what moved the wagon?
    c. where the wagon was moved?

35. If you said "Vivian doesn't like me any more," the most important part would tell:

    a. who doesn't like you?
    b. how she feels about you?
    c. who she doesn't like?

36. If someone told you "That hat looks good on you," the most important part would tell:

    a. who it looks good on?
    b. how it looks?
    c. what thing looks good?

37. If you heard someone say "Make that big giraffe run fast," the most important part would tell:

    a. who should make it run?
    b. how it should run?
    c. what should run fast?

38. If someone said to you "The piano is played by blindfolded children," the most important part would tell:

    a. what is played by the children?
    b. when it is played?
    c. which children play it?

39. If you asked a friend "Let me hold your panda on my lap," the most important part would tell:

    a. where you wanted to hold it?

b. what you wanted to do with it?
c. who was to let you do it?

40. If someone asked you "Doesn't that pickle taste sour," the most important part would tell:

a. which pickle tasted sour?
b. what thing tasted sour?
c. how the thing tasted?

41. If you heard someone say "Never tease the monkies at the zoo," the most important part would tell:

a. where not to tease monkies?
b. what animals not to tease?
c. when not to tease them?

42. If you heard someone ask "Does that old mule belong to Norton," the most important part would tell:

a. who owns the mule?
b. what he owns?
c. what kind of mule it is?

43. If someone said to you "Dirty air is not needed by people," the most important part would tell:

a. whether it is needed or not?
b. what kind of air is not needed?
c. who does not need it?

44. If you told someone "Julius was knocked down by his sister," the most important part would tell:

a. who knocked him down?
b. where he got hit?
c. who got knocked down?

45. If someone said to you "That new motorcycle was bought by Phoebe," the most important part would tell:

a. who bought the motorcycle?
b. what she did to the motorcycle?
c. which motorcycle it was?

46. If a friend asked you "Was it the big hotel that burned down," the most important part would tell:

a. what building burned?
b. where it burned?
c. what happened to the building?

47. If someone told you "Be sure you don't leave early," the

most important part would tell:

a. who could leave?
b. whether you should leave?
c. when you should leave?

48. If you asked your teacher "Do girls like to play football," the most important part would tell:

a. who likes the game?
b. how they feel about it?
c. which game they like?

49. If a friend said to you "Don't let Martha borrow your false teeth," the most important part would tell:

a. who should not get the teeth?
b. whose teeth she should not get?
c. which teeth she should not get?

50. If you heard someone say "Keep your pennies in an old sock," the most important part would tell:

a. what to put it in?
b. where to keep your money?
c. whose money to keep?

51. If someone said to you "Don't iron Petula's mini skirt for her," the most important part would tell:

a. who should do it?
b. what should not be done?
c. whose mini skirt it is?

52. If you heard someone say "Throckmorton didn't wreck his new car last night," the most important part would tell:

a. who didn't do it?
b. when he didn't do it?
c. what he didn't do?

53. If you said "Badminton is a hard game to play,' the most important part would tell:

a. what you do to the game?
b. which game it is?
c. how the game is to play?

54. If you said "Gertrude happily told him to go jump in the lake," the most important part would tell:

a. who told him to go jump?

b. how she told him to go jump?
c. where she told him to go jump?

55. If someone asked you "Doesn't the mongoose chase the cobra," the most important part would tell:

a. what gets chased?
b. who chases it?
c. what one animal does to the other?

56. If you heard your teacher say "The school bus is not driven by Mr. Hinkelwitz," the most important part would tell you:

a. what kind of bus it is?
b. what is not done to the bus?
c. who does not do it.

57. If someone told you "Percival didn't join the boy scouts last March," the most important part would tell you:

a. whether he joined?
b. what he joined?
c. when he joined?

58. If you asked a friend "Aren't you going to the monster movie today," the most important would ask:

a. when will you go?
b. whether you will go?
c. which movie you will go to?

59. If you said "Dracula is not very pretty," the most important part would tell:

a. whether he is pretty?
b. who is not pretty?
c. how pretty Draculs is not?

60. If you heard someone say "Buy Maynard some more pretzels," the most important part would tell:

a. what to buy?
b. who should buy them?
c. whether to buy them?

61. If you heard a friend say "Edna wasn't even thanked by her family," the most important part would tell:

a. who didn't thank her?
b. who should buy them?
c. whether to buy them?

62. If you heard someone say "The team is not coached by Derwood's father," the most important part would tell:

a. what is not coached?
b. who does not do it?
c. whether it is coached?

63. If you were told "It is snowing outside," the most important part would tell:

a. whether it is happening?
b. where it was happening?
c. what is happening?

64. If someone said to you "Don't take your pet gorilla to school today," the most important part would tell:

a. where you should not take it?
b. when you should not take it?
c. what you should not take?

ANSWER KEY

1.	a
2.	c
3.	b
4.	c
5	a
6.	b
7.	c
8.	a
9.	a
10.	a
11.	c
12.	a
13.	a
14.	b
15.	c
16.	b
17.	b
18.	b
19.	a
20.	c
21.	a
22.	b
23.	b
24.	c
25.	b
26.	a
27.	b
28.	a
29.	b
30.	c
31.	c
32.	a
33.	b
34.	a
35.	c
36.	c
37.	b
38.	c
39.	a
40.	b
41.	b
42.	c
43.	b
44.	a
45.	b
46.	a
47.	c
48.	c
49.	a
50.	b
51.	a
52.	c
53.	b
54.	b
55.	a
56.	b
57.	a
58.	c
59.	b
60.	a
61.	a
62.	b
63.	a
64.	b

APPENDIX II

ARRANGEMENT OF TEST ITEMS

Type I	Sentence Type	Element Stressed
1	Positive Interrogative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
2	Positive Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
3	Positive Declarative	Adverb of Time
4	Positive Declarative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
5	Positive Imperative	Verb acting as Main Part of the Predicate
6	Negative Imperative	Adverb of Location
7	Positive Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
8	Positive Passive	Verb
9	Positive Interrogative	Adverb of Time
10	Negative Interrogative	Noun acting as Direct Object
11	Positive Imperative	Adverb of Location
12	Positive Passive	Adjective
13	Positive Passive	Noun acting as Subject
14	Negative Declarative	Adjective
15	Negative Imperative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
16	Negative Interrogative	Verb
17	Positive Imperative	Adverb of Manner
18	Negative Declarative	Verb
19	Positive Interrogative	Verb
20	Negative Interrogative	Noun acting as Direct Object
21	Negative Passive	Preposition
22	Negative Interrogative	Adjective
23	Positive Passive	Noun acting as Subject
24	Positive Imperative	Noun acting as Direct Object
25	Negative Imperative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
26	Negative Declarative	Adverb of Location
27	Negative Imperative	Adjective
28	Negative Passive	Noun acting as Subject
29	Negative Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
30	Negative Passive	Verb
31	Positive Interrogative	Noun acting as Subject
32	Negative Passive	Noun acting as Object of

Type II	Sentence Type	Element Stressed
		the Preposition
33	Negative Interrogative	Noun acting as Direct Object
34	Positive Passive	Verb
35	Negative Declarative	Noun acting as Direct Object
36	Positive Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
37	Positive Imperative	Adverb of Manner
38	Positive Passive	Adjective
39	Positive Interrogative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
40	Negative Interrogative	Noun acting as Subject
41	Positive Imperative	Noun acting as Direct Object
42	Positive Interrogative	Adjective
43	Negative Passive	Adjective
44	Positive Passive	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
45	Positive Passive	Verb
46	Positive Interrogative	Noun acting as Subject
47	Negative Imperative	Adverb of Time
48	Positive Interrogative	Noun acting as Direct Object
49	Negative Imperative	Noun acting as Direct Object
50	Positive Imperative	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
51	Negative Imperative	Preposition
52	Negative Declarative	Verb
53	Positive Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
54	Positive Declarative	Adverb of Manner
55	Negative Interrogative	Noun acting as Direct Object
56	Negative Passive	Verb
57	Negative Declarative	Verb
58	Negative Interrogative	Adjective
59	Negative Declarative	Noun acting as Subject
60	Positive Imperative	Noun acting as Direct Object
61	Negative Passive	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
62	Negative Passive	Noun acting as Object of the Preposition
63	Positive Declarative	Verb
64	Negative Imperative	Adverb of Time

APPENDIX III

Item Analysis

Number of Students	= 304
Number of Items	= 64
Mean	= 34.34
Standard Deviation	= 13.31
Reliability	= .92***
Standard Error of Measure	= 3.56

Item	Discrimination** Index	Item	Difficulty* Index
32	.565	47	.731
12	.560	16	.721
8	.556	2	.711
1	.534	17	.659
64	.523	4	.654
13	.522	62	.654
27	.512	41	.641
26	.509	43	.641
28	.508	6	.625
54	.508	50	.611
45	.507	14	.601
31	.506	15	.598
29	.497	25	.595
11	.497	63	.591
36	.493	52	.575
61	.493	5	.568
5	.489	3	.568
46	.484	30	.558
34	.479	59	.551
55	.478	58	.548
20	.474	49	.548
59	.469	29	.545
60	.466	22	.545
49	.456	39	.542
62	.456	53	.542
57	.452	38	.538
42	.450	46	.532
33	.450	33	.525
22	.449	24	.522
37	.449	20	.518
3	.449	60	.518
23	.448	64	.515
19	.444	57	.512
44	.444	1	.505

30	.436	61	.498
25	.435	32	.488
38	.434	44	.485
4	.431	48	.485
10	.426	54	.482
63	.419	35	.475
53	.418	12	.465
24	.404	37	.462
43	.396	9	.462
18	.395	18	.452
17	.393	28	.449
2	.380	8	.449
41	.376	13	.445
40	.382	27	.445
9	.365	36	.439
15	.360	31	.435
48	.354	40	.425
16	.352	23	.425
35	.334	55	.422
6	.334	10	.412
56	.326	11	.399
14	.320	34	.399
7	.317	56	.395
58	.307	19	.389
39	.304	45	.375
47	.285	26	.369
52	.251	42	.359
51	.214	7	.286
21	.169	21	.252
50	.151	51	.219

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*In the opinion of this investigator the last 10 items listed in the difficulty index should be omitted or restructured prior to using the Test of Oral Contrastive Stress again.

**Similarly, at least the last 12 items listed in the discrimination index should be carefully evaluated and reworked before this test is employed again.

***It is the opinion of this investigator that the obtained K-R 20 reliability score of .92 may be slightly inflated due to the fact that the students were in a position to copy some of their answers from each other and thereby spread the scores more than they might be spread under optimum testing conditions.